

Things to do

Be aware of each other.

Everyone copes in his or her own way. If you notice someone is having a hard time, talk to them, express concern and encourage them to seek additional support through the Employee Assistance Program or another resource.

Accept that work may be affected.

Job performance and interactions may be affected by stress. In time, things will return to normal. Be tolerant and flexible with yourself and each other.

If your workgroup has experienced a death, contact the family of the deceased.

Consider ways you and your group can be involved in efforts to memorialize and remember the person who has died. Consider sending pictures, a scrapbook or a collection of memories written by your workgroup.

Things to do

Remind yourself and others that this is a stressful time and that engaging in healthy behaviors can help.

Eating well and getting enough rest becomes even more important at time of high stress or sadness. Exercise and limiting the use of alcohol or other substances to cope with negative feelings can decrease the extra tension that often goes along with loss and grief.

Remember that extra support and guidance is available.

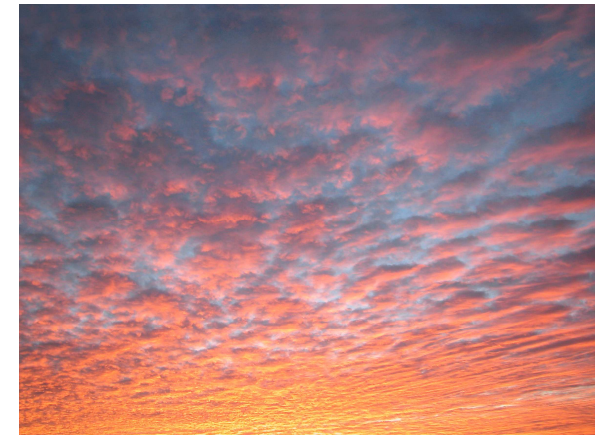
Contact PERS for more individualized information or for additional support. We can help.

Pentagon Employee Referral Service
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Common Reactions to Loss



**Pentagon Employee Referral
Service
703 692-8917**

Employees who are faced with the loss of a loved one or the serious illness or death of a co-worker may experience a variety of strong reactions. Many experience feelings of helplessness, anger, anxiety, and grief. Some may find it more difficult to concentrate or to complete tasks at work. People may avoid things that remind them of the person who is ill or of someone who has died. Any and all of these reactions are normal when we are confronted with loss in the workplace. Below are listed some common reactions to

Emotional

- Shock, emotional numbness
- Sadness, sorrow, despair
- Anger, protest, irritability, resentment
- Self-reproach, guilt, regret
- Anxiety – general or specific
- Fear of “going crazy”
- Yearning, pining
- Helplessness, feeling “out of control,” overwhelmed

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- Mood swings, emotional roller coaster
- Peace, calm, heightened awareness
- Relief
- Feeling of presence
- Loneliness
- Apathy, lack of pleasure in anything
- Agitation

Cognitive/Spiritual

- Disbelief, unreality, feeling “in a fog”
- Confusion, disorientation
- Memory, concentration problems
- Need to make sense of the death – “Why?”
- Rumination about deceased or death
- Idealization of deceased and lowered self-esteem
- Visions, contact with the deceased
- Difficulty with decisions
- Dreams or nightmares of the deceased or death
- Absentmindedness

- Feelings of meaninglessness
- Depersonalization
- Denial – “not really dead, just gone”
- Assumptive world changes
- Back/Neck/Muscle Pain

Physical

- Stomach upset/diarrhea/constipation
- Weight loss
- Feelings of weakness/fatigue/exhaustion
- Feelings of emptiness, heaviness
- Restlessness/”nerves”/hyperactivity/”wired”
- Headaches
- Chills/sweats/”cold hands”
- Chest pain/tightness/difficulty breathing
- Dry mouth
- Startle response

